

December 4, 2020

Dear Governor Lamont, Chief of Staff Mounds, and Chief Operating Officer Geballe:

Since 2004, the HOMEConnecticut campaign has brought together more than 100 diverse stakeholders, including housing advocates, non-profit organizations, business leaders, lenders, non-profit and private housing developers, and builders who care about ensuring every resident has a safe, stable place to call home. **We write to ask that you extend the state's eviction moratorium through at least March 1, 2021 and dedicate at least an additional \$100 million to the state's emergency rental assistance program.**

These proposals benefit renters and stabilize the housing market. Supporting tenants and landlords will reduce the harmful economic effects of the pandemic and will protect the health of the public. Relief is essential to both landlords and tenants. Indeed, it is the existing eviction moratorium and rental assistance programs that have so far moderated these harmful consequences. A flood of evictions after January 1 will seriously exacerbate these problems, harming the entire housing economy. The displacement caused by eviction will exacerbate public health at the very time that the Coronavirus is surging.

No one wants thousands of families, many of whom are impacted by job loss or ill health, to be put out of their homes and forced to try to find space in shelters or double up in close quarters while a deadly pandemic grows worse.¹ Extending the eviction moratorium is needed to prevent the widespread evictions, with all their adverse consequences, that will take place in its absence. An adequately funded emergency rental assistance program which provides funds directly to the landlord on behalf of the tenant is the necessary complement to the eviction moratorium and the only way to avert a rental market and eviction crisis.

As the pandemic continues into its tenth month, the assistance needed for Connecticut renter families at the greatest risk of losing their housing because of the COVID-19 crisis continues to grow and now is likely more than \$500 million. We recognize that a rental assistance program funded at that level will require resources beyond those available through state funding. We ask that you dedicate an additional \$100 million to the Temporary Rental Housing Assistance Program and additional funding above the \$100 million to adequately administer the program.

Not only has the pandemic increased the risk of low- and moderate-income families becoming unstably housed or homeless, but it also is particularly impacting families of color. Historically, such families have been more seriously affected by healthcare crises, eviction, and housing discrimination. Indeed, current evidence reveals that COVID-19 has resulted in infection and death of people of color at higher rates than the population as a whole.

A wave of evictions and housing displacement across the state will "increase the spread of COVID-19 among the highest risk populations and trigger a cycle of poor health and housing instability."² Housing

¹ Stratford woman with COVID-19 gets eviction stay <https://www.ctpost.com/news/article/Stratford-woman-with-COVID-19-gets-eviction-stay-15776215.php?src=rdctpdensecp>

² Leifheit, Kathryn M. and Linton, Sabriya L. and Raifman, Julia and Schwartz, Gabriel and Benfer, Emily and Zimmerman, Frederick J and Pollack, Craig, Expiring Eviction Moratoriums and COVID-19 Incidence and Mortality (November 30, 2020). <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3739576>

displacement and eviction prevention is a key component of controlling the pandemic by reducing COVID-19 infection, transmission, illness, hospitalizations and death and to address health inequity.

Widespread evictions in the wake of COVID-19 also will have immense public costs. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that 66,000 – 133,000 Connecticut households are at risk of eviction. Providing the public services needed if large-scale eviction-related homelessness is allowed to occur could cost between \$628 million - \$1.262 billion.³

We know that the Dept. of Housing and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority are working hard. We stand ready to continue to assist them and are available to discuss any of these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Kiley Gosselin, Executive Director
Partnership for Strong Communities
Organizing entity of the HOMEConnecticut Campaign⁴

Cc: Lt. Gov. Bysiewicz; Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno; Commissioner Gifford; Ms. Nandini Natarajan; Rep. McGee; Sen. Cassano; Rep. McCarthy Vahey; Sen. Looney; Sen. Duff; Sen. Fasano; Sen. Witkos; Sen. Kelly; Sen. Formica; Sen. Anwar; Rep. Aresimowicz; Rep. Ritter; Rep. Rojas; Rep. Klarides; Rep. Candelora, Rep. Lopes

³ <https://nlihc.org/sites/default/files/costs-of-covid19-evictions.pdf>

⁴ HOMEConnecticut works to address Connecticut's affordable housing shortage with the goal to **Ensure that all Connecticut residents have access to a range of affordable housing choices in all communities in the state.** The HOMEConnecticut Advisory Committee is a broad-based campaign comprised of the following individuals:

Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens, Connecticut Fair Housing Center
Erin Kemple, Connecticut Fair Housing Center
John Guskowski, Connecticut Chapter of the American Planning Association
Zach McKeown, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Donna Hamzy-Carroccia, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
Timothy Hollister, Shipman & Goodwin LLP
Jim Horan, Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Melvyn Colon, Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance
Melissa Kaplan-Macey, Regional Plan Association
Hiram Peck, Planner for the Town of Avon
Jim Perras, Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut
Raphael Podolsky, Connecticut Legal Services
Anika Singh Lemar, Ludwig Center for Community and Economic Development at Yale Law School
Susan Thomas, Melville Charitable Trust
Christie Stewart, Fairfield County's Center for Housing Opportunity
Gregory Ugalde, T&M Building Co., Inc.
Chris Senecal, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Julian Pierce, Fairfield County's Community Foundation